The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and official interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Conceit may puff a man up, but never prop him up.
—Ruskin.

WHOLE NO. 1410 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, APRIL 23, 1938 FRANK MORRISON, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 28, NO. 17

LEWIS, LEADER OF C. I. O. MINORITY REBELS, TRIED TO SEIZE CONTROL OF AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT, GREEN ASSERTS

The American Federation of Labor Seeks to "Unite the Forces of Labor Into One Cohesive, Strong Economic Organization," He Declares in Radio Address to Great Britain; "It Believes in Democracy as Opposed to Autocracy, Is Committed to Majority Rule and Refuses to Surrender to Minority Dictation."

Says Members of Both the American Federation of Labor and the Committee for Industrial Organization Desire Peace and Unity, But This Solidarity of Labor Is Prevented by the Despot Who is the Irresponsible Head of the Dual C. I. O., "Which is Governed by Edict, Rather Than by Law or Constitution."

The Millions of Workers Without Jobs "Are in No Way Responsible for This Unemployment Situation"; They Are Unemployed Because the Masses Are Wrongfully Deprived of Purchasing Power Due to the Economic Demoralization Resulting From Our Failure to Establish a Balanced Economy.

In the Interest of Humanity American Labor Opposes Both War and Preparation for War and Summons the Democratic Nations of the World to Safeguard Peace and Protect "Popular Government, Democratic Rule and Democratic Procedure" Against the Attacks of Autocracies and Dictatorships Wherever and Under Whatever Guise They Appear.

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Editor's Note: On April 19, 1938, William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, delivered a radio address to Great Britain under the auspices of the British Broadcasting Association. Mr. Green spoke from the studios of the Columbia Broadcasting System, in Washington, D. C. The A. F. of L. executive gave the British radio public a survey of the present economic status of working men and women in the United States, explained the origin and sinister development of the attempt of John L. Lewis and his Committee for Industrial Organization to overthrow democracy in the American Federation of Labor and establish a labor dictatorship under his personal control, stressed the cause and remedy for the tragedy of unemployment afflicting millions of workers, and urged the necessity of definite action by democracies to preserve popular governmental throughout the world. The text of Mr. Green's radio address to Great Britain follows:

I bring you a cheering message from the great mass of American workers.

In the name of the American Federation of Labor, with the united voice of its four million devoted members, I transmit to you the positive assurance that no matter what has happened in dictator-controlled countries, this great army of working men and women will never abandon the purpose to establish and maintain industrial and political democracy in the United States of America. We stand with the working people of the British Empire in a common cause for world decency and in defense of economic, racial, religious and political freedom.

For many reasons, but particularly because of the fraternal relationship existing between the British Trades Union Congress and the American Federation of Labor, I want to tell you something about the economic and industrial situation here.

We are passing through troublesome days; we are suffering from widespread unemployment. Our latest reports show that more than eleven millions are unemployed.

I would prefer to tell you about the fine things that are happening in America; but in order to furnish you with a clear and undistorted picture of the situation in the United States, I must try to strike a balance between the pessimistic and optimistic points of view.

Collective Bargaining Is Legal Right

American labor is carrying on. The passage of the National Labor Relations Act, even though it is being badly administered, has given labor a new birth of freedom. American workers are now guaranteed by law the right to bargain collectively through trade unions of their own choosing. The company union, fostered and financed by employers, has been outlawed. With the protection given by this law, working people can now assert their economic power to win a more equitable reward for their labor and establish a higher standard of life and living. With the added strength that comes from organization, they can assert their political power to achieve through legislation a fuller measure of social justice and social security.

Upon the wise exercise of this hard-won and steadily increasing economic and political power of labor, the future of our country depends.

Importance of Labor Solidarity

American working men and women understand, along with their fellow trade unionists in Great Britain, that the chief asset of organized labor is solidarity and unity. United they are strong and invincible; they become weakened through discord and division.

In the light of these facts, it is difficult to understand why any one professing to be a leader of labor would for any reason divide the house of labor, separating them into warring camps. Yet that is what has happened here. It is tragic, but true, that certain alleged labor leaders have divided the house of labor, created a dual, rebel movement, one that has already led to bitterness and strife.

Democracy is Basis of American Federation of Labor

Let me be specific. For more than one half century the American Federation of Labor has exemplified the democratic movement. It is a great democratic organization, a true federation of free trade unions through which the organized workers of the United States and Canada shape their policies and express their desires. Its fundamental objective, its driving purpose, is to spread the benefits of organization to all American workers, so they can secure their rightful share of the product of their labor, and maintain their rightful influence in the government of their country.

As the national central body of free trade unions the American Federation of Labor has two guiding principles—democracy and unity. All its laws and all its policies are decided by majority vote at annual conventions. The delegates are the elected representatives of all the unions in the Federation and their voting strength is based on the numerical strength of all affiliated unions. Thus the conventions of the American Federation of Labor are truly the congress of labor.

Federation's Law is Determined by Majority Rule

For fifty-seven consecutive years these conventions and the decisions reached therein served as an inspiration to American labor. It wasn't all smooth sailing. Always there were differences of opinion on important issues. Always these differences were submitted to a vote and always the vote of the majority became the law of organized labor for the ensuing year. The rule of the majority did not preclude the minority from renewing its battle at the next convention. But always the minority, in the true spirit of democracy and unionism, respected the decision of the majority as the law of the Federation, and all went forth from the convention united in unity and fraternity.

Lewis's Minority Group Tried to Seize A. F. of L.

This held true until the convention of 1935. There a group of delegates led by John L. Lewis sought to prevail on the convention to approve an organization policy which did not appeal to a great majority of their colleagues. The proposal was defeated by a two-thirds vote. The convention adjourned in the belief that the matter was settled, at least until the next convention. But this minority group, led by John L. Lewis, who saw in the policy of unrestricted industrial union organization a chance to seize personal control of the American labor movement, suddenly rebelled against the principle of majority rule. He formed a dual, rival, rebel movement called the Committee for Industrial Organization. He announced the committee would proceed to carry out the policy voted down by the convention.

Serious Implications of C. I. O. Minority Rebellion

Consider the implications of this rebellion. Suppose that a group in the British Trades Union Congress offered the suggestion that trade unions in Great Britain were improperly constituted and should be reshaped along other lines. Suppose that this proposal was voted down overwhelmingly. Then suppose that the minority group contemptuously ignored this decision of their fellow workers and announced their intention of forming a dual, rival body to force acceptance of the minority policy. Would the British labor movement submit?

The American Federation of Labor did not submit. It never will surrender to minority rule. It could not do so without jeopardizing the interests and the future of labor.

The C. I. O., both in operation and in principle, is autocratic. It is controlled from the top down. It is governed by edict, rather than by law or constitution. It possesses all the characteristics of any dual organization set up as a rival to existing and established functioning organizations.

A. F. of L. Is Committed to Majority Rule

The American Federation of Labor stands now where it always stood—as the instrumentality through which labor in the United States has established itself upon economic, industrial, social and political questions. It has ever sought to solidify and unite the forces of labor into one cohesive, strong economic organization. It believes in democracy as opposed to autocracy. It is committed to majority rule and refuses to surrender to minority domination. Its growth and development has run parallel with that of the nation. It is now a part of the institutional life of our country.

Peace Plan Blocked by Lewis

The bitterness and hatred engendered by the C. I. O. has caused confusion as well as division within the ranks of labor. Notwithstanding this fact, the American Federation of Labor, while resisting the efforts of the C. I. O. to destroy it, has explored every avenue of peace and conciliation. For more than two years its offers of peace were spurned; then, last Fall, a peace conference was arranged.

Long weeks of negotiation finally bore fruit in an equitable peace plan which was accepted by the representatives of both the American Federation of Labor and the C. I. O. This plan was vetoed by John L. Lewis, the leader of the C. I. O. Thus the peace efforts ended in failure.

The division which exists within the ranks of labor cannot continue indefinitely. The four million members of the American Federation of Labor want peace. The members of the C. I. O., although denied an opportunity to express their will, are just as anxious for unity. Labor self-constituted leader, no matter how dictatorial his powers, who attempts to prevent the millions of American workers from coming together in peace and harmony, eventually will be swept aside.

Millions of Workers Are Unemployed

In addition to the internal strife to which I have referred, American labor is suffering from the industrial recession which began last Summer.

The millions of workers who are still out of work and unemployed are looking to industry and the government for help. They are the victims of economic maladjustments. They are in no way responsible for this unemployment situation which is so widespread and apparently unjustifiable.

There seems to be no good reason for the existence of the unfavorable economic conditions which prevail. Although our economic machine has stalled, it has not broken down. We are confident that with necessary adjustments it will leap into action once more and pull us back on the high road to prosperity.

Abundant Life Possible, But Masses Are Denied Buying Power

Paradoxically, our immediate want is caused by our potential riches. We do not suffer because we cannot produce enough food for our people; we suffer because we cannot produce enough MORE food. We do not suffer because our factories cannot produce enough merchandise to supply our people's needs; we suffer because our factories can produce MORE merchandise than our people can buy.

The pressing problem of surplus production of farm and factory could be very largely solved if the purchasing power of the great mass of our people could be developed to the point where it would correspond with our facilities of production. Working people would buy the products of the factory and farm if they had the purchasing power with which to buy the commodities produced.

We have a great potential market; the need for manufactured goods and farm products exists; the ability of the people to buy. If we could establish an economic balance which would enable our market (which after all is made up largely of working people) to buy and consume the goods which industry would produce each day and each month, we could quickly solve the problem of surplus production of both farm and factory.

In fact there would be no limit to the maximum consuming power of our great market here were brought into action through the establishment of purchasing power developed and distributed on a fair basis.

This is much easier to say than to do. It is much easier to propose a balanced economy than to achieve it. But if we reduce the problem to essentials and proceed in the right direction, without permitting ourselves to be confused or misled by extraneous side issues, we can assuredly make substantial progress.

Government Spends Billions to Provide Employment For Jobless

The Government is endeavoring to provide relief for the millions of working people in the United States who have been forced into idleness; through public relief and public works programs, help and assistance is being extended to those who are in need and those who are unemployed. Only a few days ago the President of the United States called upon Congress to appropriate billions of dollars for relief, public works, national housing, and loans to industry and financial institutions. All this government spending program is designed to stimulate employment through an increase and spread of purchasing power.

Since 1932 twenty billion dollars (four billion pounds) have been disbursed by the Federal and State Governments through Federal Emergency Relief expenditures and Public Works Programs. While all these relief measures are to some extent inadequate, nevertheless they supply that degree of help and assistance which serves to meet the minimum needs of the millions of unemployed and their families.

These efforts are constructive. To make them really effective there must be added that vital element of unity of purpose in all fields of endeavor. There must be teamwork between government, finance, industry, business, agriculture and labor. They must pull together for their mutual benefit.

Democratic Nations Must Preserve Peace and Democracy

The American people are thinking in terms of peace. They believe in peace. They are tremendously concerned over preparations for war and over which are being made by many nations, and the threat of war which such action implies. The war in China, the war of Austria and Ethiopia, the conflict which is raging in Spain, have created a feeling of deepest apprehension.

As a result of all these developments the working people of the United States are thoroughly aroused. They know that the burden and destructive results of war fall most heavily upon the masses of the people. We, here, look to democracy, to the nations of the world free from war and destruction. We have faith in democracy and democratic principles. We believe that the great democracies of the world are more democratic than ever before. In fighting for the preservation of popular government, democratic rule and democratic procedure we are fighting to maintain peace and prevent war.

ALBERTA LEGISLATURE IMPRISONS REPORTER

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Edmonton, Canada.—Newspaper reporters in the province of Alberta, Canada, will be careful not to write untruths about members of the Alberta Legislature, especially those who may receive a jail sentence. This was the penalty imposed upon Don C. Brown, reporter on the Edmonton Journal, by the Alberta Legislature because he wrote two paragraphs which were declared to be "scandalous misrepresentations."

The resolution with respect to J. L. Robinson, a chiropractor and member of the Legislature, Mr. Brown in his newspaper article said Mr. Robinson had opposed having chiropractors specifically included in provisions for medical treatment under the Provincial Workmen's Compensation Act. Mr. Robinson said the statement was not only untrue but that it was written by a writer who knew it to be false. Acting upon Robinson's complaint the Legislature voted to send Brown to jail "during the pleasure of the Assembly."

World Federation Of Trade Unions Plans Oslo Parley

Affiliation of Russian Trade Unions to Be Considered; Illegal Immigration of Workers Placed Before National Centres of Various Countries.

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

The Executive of the International Federation of Trade Unions, with which the American Federation of Labor is affiliated, held a meeting in Paris, France, on March 17, to finalize the program for the next general council meeting in Oslo, Norway, and to consider a number of matters of importance to the international trade union movement.

According to the Bulletin of the IFTU all the members of the executive were present. They were: H. Jacobsen, Denmark; L. Jouhaux, France; E. Kupper, Holland; C. Mertens, Belgium; R. Tayerle, Czechoslovakia; W. Schevenels, general secretary, and G. Stolz, assistant secretary.

After pointing out that "the international situation and the position created by Hitler's occupation of Austria had already been dealt with in the three days' meeting with the Labor and Socialist International which preceded the executive meeting," the Bulletin of the Federation gives the following summary of the proceedings of the Paris meeting:

"The Executive meeting devoted itself in addition to the preparations for the 1938 General Council meeting which opens in Oslo, Norway, May 13. It adopted the Report on Activities submitted by the Secretariat and settled a number of other questions regarding the General Council meeting and the conference of International Trade Secretariats.

"The Executive noted the views of National Centres on the question of affiliation of the Russian Trade Unions, and appointed Schevenels, the General Secretary, to act as rapporteur on this item in the General Council meeting.

Committee on Economic Questions Appointed

"The Executive also had before it a report from Schevenels on the recent Union economic experts held at the end of February, and adopted the most important conclusions contained therein. It was decided to appoint a small committee to deal regularly with important economic questions. This is to meet under the chairmanship of Comrade C. Mertens, and is to be composed of: Comrades G. Woodcock (Great Britain), N. Lindgren (Denmark), M. Weber (Switzerland) and G. Kreyssig, IFTU economic expert. It was also decided to develop the economic department of the IFTU and to extend the supply and interchange of information on economic questions. A new committee will meet at regular meetings and is charged by the Executive with drawing up detailed proposals according to the development of the IFTU economic department and the suggestions made by the economic experts' meeting.

"The Executive heard an interim Report from the auditors and approved the budget for 1938, which will be submitted to the IFTU Congress which takes place in Oslo together with the statement of accounts.

Immigration of Workers Considered

"Having dealt with certain questions of organisation, the Executive considered the question of the illegal immigration of workers and decided to make an enquiry of the National Centres, in order to obtain detailed information on this subject, particularly in view of the disturbing repercussions on general conditions of work and wages.

Austrian Dictatorship Explored

"On the Austrian situation, the Executive heard a short report on the first visit made by its Vice-President, C. Kupers, and Schevenels, the General Secretary, and of a second visit made by Comrade Kupers, who had been to Vienna at the time of the German occupation of Austria. A written report on this subject will be submitted.

"It was decided that the IFTU should be represented by its General Secretary at the Congress of the Dutch National Trade Union Centre, to be held at Amsterdam from the 9th to 12th May.

"It was also decided that the Program should be sent to Mexico expressing solidarity with the Mexican workers and people in the struggle against international imperialism in the petroleum industry.

Anarchist International Rebuffed

"A proposal received from the International Workingmen's Association (anarchist International) could not be agreed to. The IFTU will continue, with all the forces at its command, the campaign against war and Fascism as laid down in the Paris conference with the Labour and Socialist International on the preceding day.

"The next meeting will be held in Oslo, immediately prior to the General Council meeting."

A. F. of L. Approves Wage-Hour Bill Reported by House Labor Committee

Green Declares Committee's Revised Text "Embodies the Three Fundamental Requirements Fought for All Along by the American Federation of Labor—A Specific and Universal Floor for Wages, a Specific and Universal Ceiling for Hours, and Provision for Enforcement by the Department of Justice"; "Every Member of Congress, Regardless of Party Affiliation," He Asserts, "Should Vote for This New Wage and Hour Bill."

"No Employer and No Member of Congress From Any Section of the Country Can Dare to Assert That a Minimum Wage of $11 or $12 a Week Would Be An Oppressive Imposition on American Industry; Any Industry Which Depends for Survival on Sweatshop Wages and Sweatshop Conditions of Labor Should Cease to Exist in the Public Interest; Sweatshop Labor Is Like An Infection Which Spreads Its Paralyzing Poison Through the Whole Physical and Economic System of the Nation; It Has Been Outlawed By Public Opinion; It Should Be Outlawed By Statute."

By A. F. of L. Weekly News Service.

Washington, D. C.—After mature consideration, the House Labor Committee rejected the Wage and Hour Bill recommended by a sub-committee of the Labor Committee and decided to report to the House of Representatives a completely revised bill eliminating the provisions which were condemned by the American Federation of Labor and substituting provisions which enabled William Green, president of the Federation, to state that the revised text was accepted and favored by the A. F. of L.

Condemned Sub-Committee's Bill, Which Labor Committee Discarded

The sub-committee's bill, discarded by the Labor Committee, had been characterized by Mr. Green as wholly unsatisfactory because instead of providing minimum wages it provided for "a series of arbitrary wage scales with a ceiling of 40 cents an hour," because instead of maximum hours it provided for "a series of arbitrary maximum hour work-week schedules within the range of 40 to 48 hours per week," and because the enforcement of the measure instead of being lodged in the Department of Justice, was vested in a Federal board with power "to subject industry to Government fiat," which proposal, he said, was "not worthy even of consideration."

"The American Federation of Labor believes," Mr. Green added in contending his criticism of the sub-committee's bill, "that a succession of wages and hours bill should be short, simple and easily understood. It should, in our judgment, provide for a floor for wages, a ceiling for hours, and administration by the law-enforcement agency of the Government, just the same as is required in the enforcement of all other Federal statutes."

Provisions of Revised Bill Approved by Labor Committee

With the strong criticism of the American Federation of Labor before it, the members of the House Labor Committee discarded the seven-thousand word sub-committee's bill and approved a measure fixing a minimum wage of 25 cents an hour for workers in interstate commerce, with employers required to increase this minimum annually five cents an hour until it reached forty cents. The maximum work week would be fixed at forty-four hours initially and decreased by forty hours in five years. There is no differential in favor of any geographical section, but applies the same wage and hour standards to all interstate industries affected in all parts of the country.

In place of the absolutist board to enforce the measure recommended by the sub-committee and condemned by the American Federation of Labor as subjecting industry to "Government fiat," the revised bill saved by the Labor Committee declares that the Secretary of Labor, "as soon as practicable after the law becomes effective, shall after due notice to interested persons and giving them an opportunity to be heard, determine the relation of various industries to commerce." If the Secretary of Labor finds that any industry comes within the jurisdiction of the statute declares that "the Secretary shall issue an order declaring such industry to be an industry affecting commerce."

Orders issued by the Secretary of Labor are subject to review by the United States Circuit Courts of Appeals in their judicial circuits.

Jurisdiction to restrain violations of the law is vested in the "district courts of the United States and the United States courts of the Territories," which means that the enforcement of the law is vested in the Department of Justice.

Green's Statement Endorsing Labor Committee's Bill

After a thorough study of the revised Wage and Hour Bill as adopted by the House Labor Committee, President William Green of the American Federation of Labor issued the following statement:

"The American Federation of Labor accepts and favors the new Wage and Hour Bill. It embodies the three fundamental requirements fought for all along by the American Federation of Labor—a specific and universal floor for wages, a specific and universal ceiling for hours and provision for enforcement by the Department of Justice.

"In some particulars we believe the bill can be improved. We believe the 25-cents an hour minimum wage is too low to begin with and the 44-hour week too long even as a start. It is true the bill provides that these rates are stepped up until a 40-cents an hour 40-hour week is reached at the end of three years. But why postpone these benefits? The country needs them now. At this very moment, when the nation is suffering from curtailed purchasing power and widespread unemployment, a really effective wage and hour bill should prove most beneficial. We believe it would be sound common sense to adopt a bill providing a minimum wage of not less than 40 cents an hour to begin with and a maximum work week of 40 hours.

"No employer and no member of Congress from any section of the country can dare to assert that a minimum wage of $11 or $12 a week would be an oppressive imposition on American industry. Any industry which depends for survival on sweatshop wages and sweatshop conditions of labor should cease to exist in the public interest. Sweatshop labor is like an infection which spreads its paralyzing poison through the whole physical and economic system of the nation. It has been outlawed by public opinion. It should be outlawed by statute.

"The bill, as reported by the House Labor Committee, is clear, simple and easily understandable. It has been stripped of complexities of verbiage and administration. It covers only fourteen printed pages, as against sixty-two pages for previous hodge-podge measures which were opposed by the American Federation of Labor.

"Every member of Congress, regardless of party affiliation, should vote for this new Wage and Hour Bill."

EDITORIALS

FEDERAL LOANS AID RAISIN GROWERS

An outstanding illustration of the influence of organized producers of agricultural products in securing the enactment of legislation for their benefit is contained in the announcement of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration that a loan of $2,500,000 to California raisin producers has been approved by the Commodity Credit Corporation and President Roosevelt upon the recommendation of Secretary of Agriculture Wallace. The loan, the first one made under the Agricultural Act of 1938, was applied for by California producers "for the purpose of handling the remaining tonnage of raisins from the 1937 crop which is still unsold in growers' hands."

It appears that many of the raisin growers were confronted with a slash in prices because of the surplus from last year's crop, which could be accentuated if their financial condition compelled them to sell the surplus immediately.

In order to enable the raisin growers to hold the surplus for a reasonable time and dispose of it so as not to oversupply the market, and thus force down prices below profitable limits, the Government, through the Commodity Credit Corporation, will lend the raisin growers not to exceed $2,500,000 on 40,000 tons at the rate of $55 per ton, net, for standard or better quality Thompson Seedless or Muscat raisins.

Representatives of the raisin growers in California said that the Government loan "should give all necessary strength to the raisin market and should provide growers holding raisins from the 1937 crop with a market of at least $60 per ton on their standard raisins," and "should provide the necessary strength to the market to enable Sun-Maid Raisin Growers Association and other holders of raisins to sell both in the domestic and foreign markets at fair prices."

Agricultural Adjustment Administration officials said that in addition to the 2½ cent loan of $55 per ton, provision had been made for an advance up to $4 per ton to meet necessary handling and carrying charges.

Under the strong influence of organized farmers throughout the nation, Congress passed and the President signed the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938 providing for loans of Government funds, of which the raisin loan is typical, to enable those engaged in the production of agricultural commodities to secure a reasonable price for their products by controlling the price reductions which ordinarily, without Government aid, accompany the existence of crop surpluses.

BOND-OWNING TAX DODGERS CURBED

The action of the Senate in stripping future issues of United States bonds of their exemption from Federal taxes by a provision in the five-billion dollar 1938 revenue bill is regarded as a step in the right direction by those who believe there should be no tax dodgers haven sanctioned by the Government itself. The bond-tax amendment, submitted by Senator Borah, was adopted by the close vote of 34 to 33. The proposal is also favored by our president Roosevelt.

It is frequently charged that those who talk the loudest in proclaiming the desirability of amending our Federal tax laws so as to levy more taxes on the lower income groups in order to make them "tax conscious" are the very people whose safe deposit boxes are loaded with bonds exempt from Federal taxation.